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Please amend the subject application as follows:

In the specification:

Please amend page 12, line 33 to page 13, line 10 of the specification under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b) as follows. A marked up version of the amendment is attached hereto as Exhibit A:

--In one embodiment of the present invention is a screening assay for identifying a compound capable of inhibiting interaction of a peptide with the AGE binding site of RAGE (e.g., the V-domain or the minimal necessary amino acid sequence required to have binding of an AGE) which comprises: (a) admixing the peptide and a second peptide which has the sequence of the AGE binding site of RAGE and the compound; (b) determining the amount of the peptide bound to the second peptide, and (c) comparing the amount of bound peptide determined in step (b) with the amount determined in the absence of the compound, thus identifying the compound as capable of inhibiting the interaction of the peptide with the AGE binding site of RAGE.--

In the claims:

Please cancel claims 3, 9, 10, 14, 16, 19, 23, and 30-57 without prejudice or disclaimer to applicants' right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a later-filed application. Please also amend claim 11 under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c) as